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THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN BELGIUM AND HOLLAND (1941-1943)

The Hoboken Metallurgical Plant (8 kilometers south of Antwerp on the Schelde River) had a peacetime capacity of:

- 4-5,000 tons of lead per month
- 4-5,000 tons of tin per month
- 10,000 tons of copper per month
- 400 tons or 120,000 tons per year of 60% ¹² sulphuric acid (by-product)

The raw materials came from Kasanga, Belgian Congo. There was no war damage, but a shortage of raw materials threatened a stoppage of operations (1941).

The Sluiskil Nitrogen Plant (15 kilometers north of Ghent) was put out of operation in June 1940 by war damage, but is expected to be placed in operation again by the end of June 1941. The plant normally consumed 6-700,000 cubic meters of coke gas daily from neighboring coke plant. The annual capacity was 58,000 tons of nitrogen. The plant produced its own sulphuric acid (500 tons daily at 55-56% ¹² Be) from Spanish (Huelva) pyrites.

The French and Belgian chemical plants taken over by Germany could contribute nothing due to the lack of raw materials and fuel. Local demands could not be met, much less German requirements. In some cases, a lack of transportation facilities made local raw materials (pyrites around Lyon) useless.

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A propaganda broadcast by Queen Wilhelmina in 1941 from Britain to Holland over "Radio Orange" encouraged the Dutch to "perk up" on account of the British and American intervention. Wilhelmina exhorted the Dutch to cooperate with the Russians, but not to forget inherent Dutch ideas with regard to Bolshevism. She exhorted the Dutch to obstruct German

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"economic exploitation" of the Netherlands' resources and people.

The Germans noted a tendency on the part of Dutch industry to slow down cooperation after Queen Wilhelmina's speech.

In the first six months of 1941, Dutch ferrous production was as follows:

pig iron production	63,000 tons
pig iron consumption	58,000 tons (mostly for German contracts)
exports to Germany	27,000 tons

The pig iron production for the fiscal year 1939/40 was 276,279 tons.

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The demolition of bridges over canals and rivers in the Netherlands only slowed traffic.

The inland fleet of Holland in 1939 consisted of 19,280 vessels with a capacity of 3,816,000 tons. Approximately 1,400 vessels were put out of service by war operations, but only about 90 of these were beyond repair. Most of these sunk could be raised and repaired. The conversion of inland shipping from liquid fuel to coal was advantageous.

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September 1941 -- Owners of machinery, equipment, installations, etc., with equipment used less than 15 days in 1939 under normal conditions, must report such items to the Reich Bureau for Iron and Steel in Den Haag. Such items as are reported (except in cases where the total for one owner does not exceed 100 kilograms) must be sold for scrap at current prices by 31 December 1941. Special cases where the retention of such machinery is essential to the owner's business will be handled by the Bureau.

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A shortage of tin for cans forced the Netherlands canning industry (1939-50 plants putting out an average of 30 million cans yearly) to

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switch to drying fruits and vegetables and to undertake deep-freeze packing.

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October 1941 -- An increase in Holland's rape hectareage to 40,000 hectares in 1942 is expected to result in a harvest of about 80,000 tons, 25,000 tons of which are to be used for oil extraction for margarine production.

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Half of all buses and trucks in service have been converted to generator gas. At present, there are 6,233 generator gas operated vehicles in operation, 1,836 on wood, 3,405 on anthracite, and 3,412 on peat or peat coke. It is estimated that by spring 1942, 11,500 vehicles will be operating on generator gas. Some areas are adopting the use of illuminating gas, and methane is being projected for in the Amsterdam and Hilversum areas. It is expected that within that double the radius of action of vehicles now operating on illuminating gas.

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The conversion of pastureland to grain growing will, it is hoped, ease the grain situation. An increased potato harvest will somewhat offset the bread shortage.

October 1941 -- The monthly allotment of iron and steel has been cut down from 29,000 tons to 26,000 tons, of which 10,000 tons will be imported from Germany.

The production of bicycles and bicycle parts has been cut to 10 per cent of normal.

The production of coal in October amounted to 42,800 tons per work day. This corresponds to peacetime production.

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November 1941 -- Problems encountered by the Armament Inspectorate Netherlands:

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The coal and power supply is unsatisfactory. The materials supply (from Germany to Holland) for German contracts is too slow. Pastur supply should be possible, since Holland's monthly requirement of 60,000 tons constitutes only about 2 per cent of German production.

The ferrous and non-ferrous metals situation (raw materials) remains extremely difficult. Outgoing metal shipments for November were:

Copper	153 tons
Brass	1,022 tons
Nickel	36 kilograms
Tin	39 tons
Lead	249 tons
Alloys (total)	92 tons
Other turnings	67 tons

The daily coal production was 41,153 tons, still insufficient to ensure armament industry supplies.

The lack of transportation facilities and the elimination of Jews from industry is making the same situation difficult.

Inland waterways traffic is suffering from a lack of tow boats. 200 railroad cars and 4,500 trucks were pulled out for the East.

Vegetables are plentiful, but the poor harvest caused a reduction in rationed foods.

1942 -- Industrial diamonds and diamond dust is in short supply. Two Dutch firms in Amsterdam are working for the German military. The shortage is largely due to the deportation of Jews.

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Finnish Imports from Occupied Holland in 1942 (in Reichsmarks):

Poultry lime	60,000
Cauliflower	8,000
Tomatoes	130,000
Cucumbers	40,000

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Good pulpers	250,000
Cut flouze and live plants	50,000
Nursery product	15,000
Activated charcoal	20,000
Essential oils and aromatic plants	15,000
Patrol	7,000
Planting	40,000
Flour	15,000
Disinfectants	15,000
Grain and derivatives of millage	27,000
Pharmaceuticals	20,000
Food products	50,000
Medical supplies (injection)	1,000,000
Miscellaneous	<hr/> 1,000,000

Dutch imports from Occupied Holland (in Reichsmarks):

Woolen yarn	15,000
Wool	75,000
Asbestos, glass fiber and woolen	10,000
Watches	10,000
Woolen goods	20,000
Cardboard and paper	2,500,000
Cellulose	500,000
Miscellaneous	620,000
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Finnish Imports from Occupied Belgium (in Reichsmarks):

Rolling mill products	1,600,000
Telephone equipment	160,000
Rayon yarn (about 60 tons)	300,000
Mineral and other dyes	10,000

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Quartz sand	100,000
Foundry sand	2,000
Antimony oxide	6,000
Film, photographic plates, photographic paper	100,000
Machinery and equipment	200,000
Hunting rifles	60,000
Cap leather and leather goods	60,000
Chicory seed (about 2 tons)	10,000
Miscellaneous	892,000
	<u>3,500,000</u>

Finnish Exports to Occupied Belgium (in Reichsmarks):

Cellulose	500,000
Cardboard and paper	400,000
Wood shooling	150,000
Plywood doors	100,000
Miscellaneous	350,000
	<u>1,500,000</u>

Wood Supply for Generator Gas Vehicles (February 1942):

150,000 cubic meters of wood waste are available yearly from the Dutch wood industry. As a vehicle requires 60 cubic meters per year on the average for generator gas, the above-quantity suffices for 2,500 vehicles. At present, 8,235 generator gas vehicles are in operation, namely, 7,247 trucks, 843 busses, and 163 passenger cars. Thanks to the reserves of wood, anthracite, and peat, it is possible to convert an additional 3,000 vehicles to generator-gas drive.

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April 1943 -- The central kitchens of the Netherlands' Reich Food Administration are giving out 350,000 midday meals per day (ration cards not required) to workers. The food consumption for this purpose in 1942 was:

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75,000 tons of potatoes
 43,000 tons of greens
 5,000 tons of leguminous plants
 1,200 tons of meat
 625 tons of fat
 250 tons of potato flour
 350 tons of grits
 1,500 tons of skim-milk powder
 2,500 tons of onions

To 30 April 1943 -- 322,244 workers sent from the Netherlands, plus 91,749 boundary-crossers. About 200,000 remain in Germany, the remainder having dropped out because of sickness, and lapse or breach of agreements.

June 1943 -- The short rations are causing sickness in the armament industries (up to 40 per cent). The supplementary midday meal for workers is of too low nutritional value to help. More fat is needed in the workers' diet.

A shortage of materials is reducing the ship-repair capabilities.

A lack of fuel threatens the stoppage of motor transport. The railroads and inland waterways cannot take over a larger volume. The possibilities for alleviation of the situation through the transportation unions, whose network is spread all over the country, are exhausted.

The use of women in the Netherlands' industry is ineffective, largely because of lack of discipline. Despite the prohibition of unauthorized job-changes and refusal to work, no punitive measures have been instituted.

A lack of skilled personnel and the unforeseen necessity for the repair and replacement of machinery has caused an up to 40 per cent slowdown in the production of infantry shell cases. Some facilities have not been used because of the labor shortage. There is a lack of facilities for the large-scale production of bridge equipment, engineer equipment, gun parts, etc., which is causing an increase in production costs.

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